

**JOINT STATEMENT OF:**

**VINCENT R. SOMBROTTO, PRESIDENT  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS, AFL-CIO**

**WILLIAM QUINN, PRESIDENT  
NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION, AFL-CIO**

**STEVEN SMITH, PRESIDENT  
NATIONAL RURAL LETTER CARRIERS ASSOCIATION**

Mr. Chairman, the National Association of Letter Carriers, the National Rural Letter Carriers Association, and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union represent approximately 353,000 U.S. Postal Service employees. We commend your tireless efforts to make the U.S. Postal Service a dynamic government endeavor. The American public also seeks to maintain the stability of this vital public service provided by our members. In fact, in a recent survey to measure How Americans View Government, 89 percent of those polled by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press gave employees of the Postal Service a favorable job performance rating. The Postal Service was the agency in which the American people had the most trust. The Poll Analysis stated: "The Postal Service stands out from other departments. Americans think of the Postal Service in a very different manner than they think of other departments." We look forward to continue to offer the type and quality of services that Americans always have expected from us.

For these reasons, we strongly support your desire not only to maintain, but to enhance the operations of the Postal Service. We agree with you that the Postal Service must continue to meet the growing expectations of American businesses, the mailing public, and postal patrons. We also strongly share your desire not to impede upon the often complex relationship between the Postal Service and its employees. This relationship, though at times difficult, is best carried out within the framework of collective bargaining. We applaud your legislation's recognition

that contract negotiations are fundamental and sacrosanct. One of the paramount elements of this relationship are the negotiations over compensation, reimbursements, and benefits. Therefore, it is critical that legislation not in any way hinder such negotiations. We know and are grateful that you understand this point.

The key ingredient in any type of postal legislation is to protect "Universal Service." Simply put, postal employees must continue to process and deliver letters and packages to everyone, everyday, everywhere: uniform, affordable postal rates; normal six-day deliveries; and processing and delivery to all addresses. This is what Americans demand from "Universal Service." It doesn't take a complex regulatory procedure to define what Americans demand from the Postal Service. Divorced from congressional appropriations, the Postal Service must rely on revenue-producing products to help support the infrastructure that guarantees universal service. Without this financial support, universal service cannot be maintained at the level that our mailers and patrons demand, and our 200-year public policy requires.

Despite the misinformation being promulgated by Postal competitors, competition within the mailing market is fierce. This is particularly true in and between highly profitable business markets, since those are the only markets that are served by postal competitors. Inasmuch as the U.S. Postal Service does not pick and choose which markets it wants to serve, it must offset infrastructure and overhead costs with specific postal products. Postal competitors charge different rates for different addresses; different levels of service for different delivery areas; and even choose not to serve an area at all. However, the Postal Service does not discriminate. The Postal Service is reliant on certain products to support the revenue needs of providing nondiscriminatory postal service. One such product making a substantial contribution to this "universal overhead" is "priority mail." Postal competitors seeking to assault this product line will undermine the Postal Service's ability to make contributions to the maintenance of "universal" infrastructure costs. The so-called double-postage rule provides appropriate and necessary revenue, enabling the Postal Service to guarantee continuing rural and urban mail services.

Postal competitors who engage in heated rhetoric about the "evil" postal monopoly and how it

unfairly burdens them are disingenuous at best. Billions of dollars are being diverted away from the Postal Service every year, as the result of competitors having wrested the package and overnight markets away from the Postal Service. They now want more, expanding at the expense of the U.S Postal Service. To capitulate to their demands would be to put universal service provided by the U.S. Postal Service at enormous risk.

Finally, we applaud the Chairman for his desire to truncate the overly cumbersome rate-setting process. The future of the Postal Service requires expeditious consideration of postal rates in order to react to the postal market and better serve the mailing public.

As the Subcommittee proceeds in its quest to improve and modernize Postal operations, we look forward to continue the constructive dialogue that we have had with you and your staff.